

South Simcoe Arts Council continues community connections

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At a time when many organizations have suspended activity, the South Simcoe Arts Council has found ways to continue to connect with the community and offer opportunities to engage in meaningful art activities.

It has been a difficult spring, particularly for our students. Many events were cancelled, including the South Simcoe Arts Council's March Break workshops.

When COVID-19 appeared in Canada, the SSAC was preparing for our annual Music Festival which typically takes place in April.

We had registrations for Piano, Voice, Strings, and Speech Arts/Drama. Our team responded to the changing situation quickly by transitioning to a Virtual Music Festival. Our competitors were invited to submit their video performances which were adjudicated online by professional performers. We have been posting many performances on our Facebook page, so we are still able to share the incredible music talent of South Simcoe. At a time when so much was uncertain and changing, our students were able to follow through on their goal of preparing for and performing their pieces for the SSAC Music Festival. The community continues to support the Music Festival. Thanks to donors such as Tec We Gwill Women's Institute, Dr. Mary Hookey, Joyful Sounds Music Studio, James and Jan Atkinson and KD Wray Professional Corporation, we are able to offer cash prizes to our top winners.

The South Simcoe Arts Council has been at its current address on Victoria Street in Alliston for four years. We sell artwork by our member artists.

In addition to paintings and photographs, SSAC's FortyOne: Local Art Market sells artisan work such as jewellery, pottery, hand-carved wood, felted purses, books by local authors, stained glass, and greeting cards.

Many items are more than beautiful, they are functional as well - hand-turned pens, alpaca socks, hand-knit hats, leather dopp kit, paint-pour clocks. Shoppers can be confident that they are supporting local artists when they purchase their unique piece of art at FortyOne: Local Art Market.

Once social restrictions are lifted, customers may even meet the artist while in the store! In the meantime, we are very excited to announce the launch of our online store, FortyOne: Local Art Market. Items are displayed on the South Simcoe Arts Council website and available for curbside pickup.

The South Simcoe Arts Council will be holding the 5th annual Creative Works Writing Contest at the end of May. Authors from ages 8 years and up are invited to submit their short stories or poetry for the chance to win cash prizes and get written feedback from published authors.

We have engaged award-winning Canadian author Maria Reva, as well as local authors Carolyn J. Morris (judging children's entries) and Judy Penz Sheluk (judging youth entries). The modest entry fees make the Creative Works Writing Contest accessible to all.

The SSAC is committed to bringing Arts to All. As always, if finances are an issue, we invite individuals to contact the office. Entries for the Creative Works Writing Contest are due by May 25th. Applicants can find submission information and rules at the SSAC's website, www.SouthSimcoeArtsCouncil.com. Online registration is available.

One thing the pandemic has shown us is how important the Arts are to the human spirit. Even in isolation? perhaps especially in isolation? we are expressing ourselves creatively, through TikTok, cake decorating, composing songs, painting, quilting, learning a new hobby, writing a poem or short story. The South Simcoe Arts Council is proud to offer an outlet and an opportunity for our community members to explore their creative side.